

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, June 23, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Of all the gifts that You so generously have given, O God, we are appreciative of the gift of friendship. For those who support us all the day long and for those whose kindness and concern help us meet the challenges of the day, we offer these words of thanksgiving and praise. May each of us learn to support each other with respect and appreciation, with trust and faith and with that bond of love that stands all the tests of time. May Your blessing, O God, be with us now and evermore. Amen.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. There will be 15 one-minutes on each side this morning.

## SUPPORT H.R. 1487, NATIONAL MONUMENT NEPA COMPLIANCE ACT

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Times has reported that the Clinton administration is planning to ban public use on 5 million acres of public land before the 2000 presidential election.

Now, why would this President deny Americans the right to use their public lands? Well, the Times says it is to woo environmentalists.

Do I need to remind the President that not just environmentalists but

conservationists, bird hunters, bird watchers and other outdoor recreationists have all the rights to use that public land as well, and they all have the right to pull the lever on the voting booth.

To make matters worse, the President's own Cabinet is acknowledging the recklessness of this proposal. Secretary Bruce Babbitt is quoted as saying, "We have switched the rules of the game. We are not trying to do anything legislatively."

The implication is clear. If Congress does not pass the laws that the President wants passed, then he will make his own laws through regulation, executive orders and policy directives.

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to help stop this abuse of executive power, protect our constitutional rights as Members of Congress and support H.R. 1487, the National Monument NEPA Compliance Act.

## PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. CUMMINGS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, sadly, over 50 percent of Americans believe that with managed care the quality of health care has declined. They feel powerless and unprotected.

The solution? A Bill of Rights.

Our Nation's forefathers were concerned about the government becoming unresponsive to the will of the people, so they enacted citizen protections and guarantees. Today, managed care has become unresponsive to the will of our Nation's patients. Lack of access to medical care or prescription drugs, inability to determine when medical care is necessary, and inability to seek legal redress on medical decisions.

Enactment of a Patients' Bill of Rights is ripe. As lawmakers, it is our duty. Let us adopt our forefathers' insight, renew our citizens' sense of empowerment in their health care, and pass a Patients' Bill of Rights.

## IRS TARGETS POOR SOUTHERNERS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, every day there seems to be a new horror story coming out of the IRS. I sort of feel like David Letterman, because the stories I have to tell are so implausible, so hard to believe, that I should probably say, "I'm not making this up."

It turns out that poor Southerners are more likely than almost anyone else to be audited by the IRS. Why do you think this is? Well, of course, one reason is because there is rampant abuse, truly massive abuse in the earned income tax credit program and the IRS is perfectly correct in going after tax cheats who are ripping off their fellow Americans.

The problem is that there is another reason why poor Southerners are being targeted. That reason is more sinister and it is a reason the IRS does not want to talk about.

The poor do not have the resources to defend themselves against an army of IRS lawyers.

So here we have the United States Government embarked on a deliberate policy to take advantage of the weak and vulnerable just struggling to get by, barely making it to the next payday.

I think that is wrong.

## MANAGED CARE DISCHARGE PETITION

(Mr. GEPHARDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, instead of addressing the crisis of health care in our Nation, we keep finding excuse after excuse to block progress on this issue.

Let us stop the delay. We have a road map for reforming HMO care, the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights.

There is not a one of us who would choose an MBA over an M.D. when it comes to our family's medical health, but that is exactly what has happened to our health care system. We have taken the power away from those who know and care about saving lives and we have given it to people whose priority is simply making money.

It needs to change, and that change can begin today.

I ask every Member on both sides of the aisle to join me in signing this petition to make sure that the needs of America's families are not pushed aside yet again, and to make sure we fulfill our responsibility to working families and prevent them from worrying about whether their children will get the care they need and deserve for another year.

Let us stop the obstruction, let us sign the petition, and let us get to work.